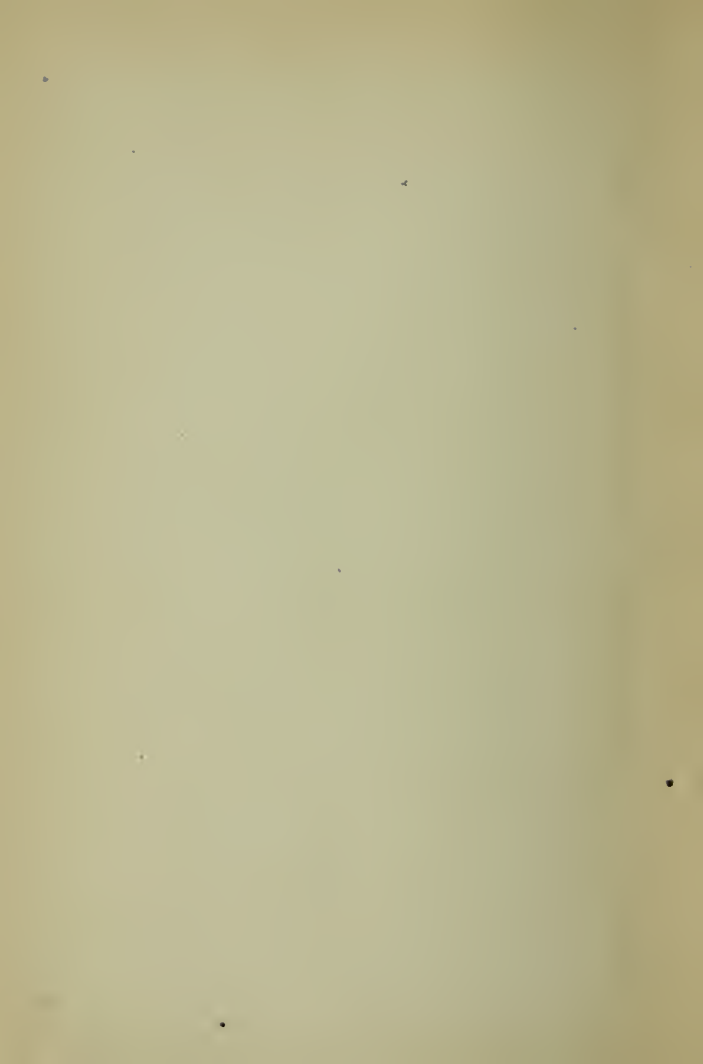




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VERSES by H.H.

James R. Oscood & Co.



VERSES.

BY H. H.

[Helen Hunt Jackson]



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DEDICATION.



WHEN children in the summer weather play,
Flitting like birds through sun and wind and
rain,

From road to field, from field to road again,
Pathetic reckoning of each mile they stray
They leave in flowers forgotten by the way ;
Forgotten, dying, but not all in vain,
Since, finding them, with tender smiles, half pain,
Half joy, we sigh, " Some child passed here to-day."
Dear one, — whose name I name not lest some tongue
Pronounce it roughly, — like a little child
Tired out at noon, I left my flowers among
The wayside things. I know how thou hast smiled,
And that the thought of them will always be
One more sweet secret thing 'twixt thee and me.





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V E R S E S .



SPINNING.

IKE a blind spinner in the sun,
I tread my days ;
I know that all the threads will run
Appointed ways ;
I know each day will bring its task,
And, being blind, no more I ask.

I do not know the use or name
Of that I spin ;
I only know that some one came,
And laid within
My hand the thread, and said, " Since you
Are blind, but one thing you can do."

Sometimes the threads so rough and fast
And tangled fly,
I know wild storms are sweeping past,
And fear that I
Shall fall ; but dare not try to find
A safer place, since I am blind.

I know not why, but I am sure
 That tint and place,
In some great fabric to endure
 Past time and race
My threads will have ; so from the first,
Though blind, I never felt accurst.

I think, perhaps, this trust has sprung
 From one short word
Said over me when I was young, —
 So young, I heard
It, knowing not that God's name signed
My brow, and sealed me his, though blind.

But whether this be seal or sign
 Within, without,
It matters not. The bond divine
 I never doubt.
I know he set me here, and still,
And glad, and blind, I wait His will ;

But listen, listen, day by day,
 To hear their tread
Who bear the finished web away,
 And cut the thread,
And bring God's message in the sun,
"Thou poor blind spinner, work is done."

MY LEGACY.



THEY told me I was heir, I turned in haste,
And ran to seek my treasure,
And wondered as I ran how it was placed,—
If I should find a measure
Of gold, or if the titles of fair lands
And houses would be laid within my hands.

I journeyed many roads ; I knocked at gates ;
I spoke to each wayfarer
I met, and said, “ A heritage awaits
Me. Art not thou the bearer
Of news ? Some message sent to me whereby
I learn which way my new possessions lie ? ”

Some asked me in ; naught lay beyond their door ;
Some smiled and would not tarry,
But said that men were just behind who bore
More gold than I could carry ;
And so the morn, the noon, the day were spent,
While empty-handed up and down I went.

At last one cried, whose face I could not see,
As through the mists he hasted ;
“ Poor child, what evil ones have hindered thee,
Till this whole day is wasted ?
Hath no man told thee that thou art joint heir
With one named Christ, who waits the goods to
share ? ”

The one named Christ I sought for many days,
In many places vainly ;
I heard men name his name in many ways ;
I saw his temples plainly ;
But they who named him most gave me no sign
To find him by, or prove the heirship mine.

And when at last I stood before his face,
I knew him by no token
Save subtle air of joy which filled the place ;
Our greeting was not spoken ;
In solemn silence I received my share,
Kneeling before my brother and "joint heir."

My share ! No deed of house or spreading lands,
As I had dreamed ; no measure
Heaped up with gold ; my elder brother's hands
Had never held such treasure.
Foxes have holes, and birds in nests are fed :
My brother had not where to lay his head.

My share ! The right like him to know all pain
Which hearts are made for knowing ;
The right to find in loss the surest gain ;
To reap my joy from sowing
In bitter tears ; the right with him to keep
A watch by day and night with all who weep.

My share ! To-day men call it grief and death ;
I see the joy and life to-morrow ;

I thank our Father with my every breath,
For this sweet legacy of sorrow ;
And through my tears I call to each, " Joint heir
With Christ, make haste to ask him for thy share."

LOVE'S LARGESS.



T my heart's door
Love standeth, like a king beside
His royal treasury, whose wide
Gates open swing, and cannot hide
Their priceless store.

His touch and hold
Its common things to jewels turned ;
In his sweet fires the dross he burned
Away ; and thus he won and earned
And made its gold.

So rich I find
Myself in service of this king,
The goods we spare, in alms I fling ;
And breathless days too few hours bring
Me to be kind,

To souls whose pain
My heart can scarcely dare to greet
With pity, while my own complete

And blessed joy their loss must mete
By my great gain.

Diviner air
Of beauty, and a grace more free,
More soft and solemn depths I see
In every woman's face, since he
Has called me fair.

More true and sure
Each man's heart seems, more firm for right ;
Each man I hold more strong in fight,
Since he stands ever in my sight,
So brave, so pure.

More of sun's fire
Than days can use, and more than nights
Can name, of stars with rhythmic lights,
And sweetest singing flocks, whose flights
Can never tire, —

More bloom than eyes
Can reach, or hands to grasp may dare, —
More music in the constant air,
Than each round wave can hold and bear,
Before it dies, —

And more of life
For living, than all death can kill,
More good than evil's utmost will
Can thwart, and peace to more than still
The fiercest strife, —

All these I find
 In service of this gracious king ;
 From goods we spare, such alms I fling ;
 And pray swift days more hours to bring,
 More bonds to bind.

O happiness !
 To utter thee, in vain our eyes
 Seek tears ; and vainly all speech tries ;
 This thing alone our king denies
 In Love's largess.

FOUND FROZEN.



HE died, as many travellers have died,
 O'ertaken on an Alpine road by night ;
 Numbed and bewildered by the falling snow,
 Striving, in spite of failing pulse, and limbs
 Which faltered and grew feeble at each step,
 To toil up the icy steep, and bear
 Patient and faithful to the last, the load
 Which, in the sunny morn, seemed light !

And yet

'T was in the place she called her home, she died ;
 And they who loved her with the all of love
 Their wintry natures had to give, stood by
 And wept some tears, and wrote above her grave
 Some common record which they thought was true ;
 But I, who loved her first, and last, and best, — I
 knew.

MY DAYS.



VEILED priestess, in a holy place,
 Day pauseth on her threshold, beckoning ;
 As infants to the mother's bosom spring
 At sound of mother's voice, although her
 face

Be hid, I leap with sudden joy. No trace
 Of fear I feel ; I take her hand and fling
 Her arm around my neck, and walk and cling
 Close to her side. She chooses road and pace ;
 I feast along the way on her shewbread ;
 I help an hour or two on her great task ;
 Beyond this honoring, no wage I ask.
 Then, ere I know, sweet night slips in her stead,
 And, while by sunset fires I rest and bask,
 Warm to her faithful breast she folds my head.

THE ZONE OF CALMS.*



S yearning currents from the trackless snows,
 And silent Polar seas, unceasing sweep
 To South, to North, and linger not where
 leap

Red fires from glistening cones, — nor where the rose
 Has triumph on the snow-fed Paramos,

* The Zone of Calms is the space comprised between the second degree north latitude and the second degree south.

"You saw no swallow and no bee before
You came?"

"I do remember past my door
There brushed a bird and bee. O, dearer presage
Than I had dreamed! You sent by them a mes-
sage?"

MY LIGHTHOUSES.



T westward window of a palace gray,
Which its own secret still so safely keeps
That no man now its builder's name can
say,

I lie and idly sun myself to-day,
Dreaming awake far more than one who sleeps,
Serenely glad, although my gladness weeps.

I look across the harbor's misty blue,
And find and lose that magic shifting line
Where sky one shade less blue meets sea, and
through
The air I catch one flush as if it knew
Some secret of that meeting, which no sign
Can show to eyes so far and dim as mine.

More ships than I can count build mast by mast
Gay lattice-work with waving green and red
Across my window-panes. The voyage past,

They crowd to anchorage so glad, so fast,
Gliding like ghosts, with noiseless breath and tread,
Mooring like ghosts, with noiseless iron and lead.

“O ships and patient men who fare by sea,”
I stretch my hands and vainly questioning cry,
“Sailed ye from west? How many nights could ye
Tell by the lights just where my dear and free
And lovely land lay sleeping? Passed ye by
Some danger safe, because her fires were nigh?”

Ah me! my selfish yearning thoughts forget
How darkness but a hand's-breadth from the coast
With danger in an evil league is set!
Ah! helpless ships and men more helpless yet,
Who trust the land-lights' short and empty boast;
The lights ye bear aloft and prayers avail ye most.

But I — ah, patient men who fare by sea,
Ye would but smile to hear this empty speech, —
I have such beacon-lights to burn for me,
In that dear west so lovely; new, and free,
That evil league by day, by night, can teach
No spell whose harm my little bark can reach.

No towers of stone uphold those beacon-lights;
No distance hides them, and no storm can shake;
In valleys they light up the darkest nights,
They outshine sunny days on sunny heights;
They blaze from every house where sleep or wake
My own who love me for my own poor sake.

Each thought they think of me lights road of flame
 Across the seas ; no travel on it tires
 My heart. I go if they but speak my name ;
 From Heaven I should come and go the same,
 And find this glow forestalling my desires.
 My darlings, do you hear me? Trim the fires !

GENOA, November 30.

IN TIME OF FAMINE.



HE has no heart," they said, and turned
 away,

Then, stung so that I wished my words
 might be

Two-edged swords, I answered low : —

“ Have ye

Not read how once when famine held fierce sway
 In Lydia, and men died day by day
 Of hunger, there were found brave souls whose glee
 Scarce hid their pangs, who said, ‘ Now we
 Can eat but once in two days ; we will play
 Such games on those days when we eat no food
 That we forget our pain.’

“ Thus they withstood

Long years of famine ; and to them we owe
 The trumpets, pipes, and balls which mirth finds good

To-day, and little dreams that of such woe
They first were born.

“That woman’s life I know
Has been all famine. Mock now if ye dare,
To hear her brave sad laughter in the air.”

THE PRINCE IS DEAD.



ROOM in the palace is shut. The king
And the queen are sitting in black.
All day weeping servants will run and
bring,

But the heart of the queen will lack
All things ; and the eyes of the king will swim
With tears which must not be shed,
But will make all the air float dark and dim,
As he looks at each gold and silver toy,
And thinks how it gladdened the royal boy,
And dumbly writhes while the courtiers read
How all the nations his sorrow heed.

The Prince is dead.

The hut has a door, but the hinge is weak,
And to-day the wind blows it back ;
There are two sitting there who do not speak ;
They have begged a few rags of black.
They are hard at work, though their eyes are wet
With tears which must not be shed ;

They dare not look where the cradle is set ;
They hate the sunbeam which plays on the floor,
But will make the baby laugh out no more ;
They feel as if they were turning to stone,
They wish the neighbors would leave them alone.
The Prince is dead.

POPPIES ON THE WHEAT.



LONG Ancona's hills the shimmering heat,
A tropic tide of air with ebb and flow
Bathes all the fields of wheat until they
glow

Like flashing seas of green, which toss and beat
Around the vines. The poppies lithe and fleet
Seem running, fiery torchmen, to and fro
To mark the shore.

The farmer does not know
That they are there. He walks with heavy feet,
Counting the bread and wine by autumn's gain,
But I, — I smile to think that days remain
Perhaps to me in which, though bread be sweet
No more, and red wine warm my blood in vain,
I shall be glad remembering how the fleet,
Lithe poppies ran like torchmen with the wheat.

GONDOLIEDS.

I.

YESTERDAY.



EAR yesterday, glide not so fast;
O, let me cling
To thy white garments floating past;
Even to shadows which they cast
I cling, I cling.
Show me thy face
Just once, once more ; a single night
Cannot have brought a loss, a blight
Upon its grace.

Nor are they dead whom thou dost bear,
Robed for the grave.
See what a smile their red lips wear ;
To lay them living wilt thou dare
Into a grave ?
I know, I know,
I left thee first ; now I repent ;
I listen now ; I never meant
To have thee go.

Just once, once more, tell me the word
Thou hadst for me !
Alas ! although my heart was stirred,
I never fully knew or heard
It was for me.
O yesterday,

My yesterday, thy sorest pain,
Were joy couldst thou but come again, —
Sweet yesterday.

VENICE, May 26.

II.

TO-MORROW.

ALL red with joy the waiting west,
O little swallow,
Couldst thou tell me which road is best?
Cleaving high air with thy soft breast
For keel, O swallow,
Thou must o'erlook
My seas and know if I mistake;
I would not the same harbor make
Which yesterday forsook.

I hear the swift blades dip and splash
Of unseen rowers;
On unknown land the waters dash;
Who knows how it be wise or rash
To meet the rowers!
Premi! Premi!
Venetia's boatmen lean and cry;
With voiceless lips, I drift and lie
Upon the twilight sea.

The swallow sleeps. Her last low call
Had sound of warning.

Sweet little one, whate'er befall,
 Thou wilt not know that it was all,
 In vain thy warning.
 I may not borrow
 A hope, a help. I close my eyes ;
 Cold wind blows from the Bridge of Sighs ;
 Kneeling I wait to-morrow.

VENICE, May 30.

"SPOKEN."



COUNTING the hours by bells and lights
 We rose and sank ;
 The waves on royal banquet-heights
 Tossed off and drank
 Their jewels made of sun and moon,
 White pearls at midnight, gold at noon.

Counting the hours by bells and lights,
 We sailed and sailed ;
 Six lonely days, six lonely nights,
 No ship we hailed.
 Till all the sea seemed bound in spell,
 And silence sounded like a knell.

At last. just when by bells and lights
 Of seventh day
 The dawn grew clear, in sudden flights
 White sails away

To east, like birds, went spreading slow
Their wings which reddened in the glow.

No more we count the bells and lights ;
 We laugh for joy.
The trumpets with their brazen might
 Call, " Ship ahoy ! "
We hold each other's hands ; our cheeks
Are wet with tears ; but no one speaks.

In instant comes the sun and lights
 The ship with fire ;
Each mast creeps up to dizzy heights,
 A blazing spire ;
One faint " Ahoy," then all in vain
We look ; we are alone again.

I have forgotten bells and lights,
 And waves which drank
Their jewels up ; those days and nights
 Which rose and sank
Have turned like other pasts, and fled,
And carried with them all their dead.

But every day that fire ship lights
 My distant blue,
And every day glad wonder smites
 My heart anew,
How in that instant each could heed
And hear the other's swift God-speed.

Counting by hours thy days and nights
In weariness,
O patient soul, on godlike heights
Of loneliness,
I passed thee by ; tears filled our eyes ;
The loud winds mocked and drowned our cries.

The hours go by, with bells and lights ;
We sail, we drift ;
Our souls in changing tasks and rites,
Find work and shrift.
But this I pray, and praying know
Till faith almost to joy can grow

That hour by hour the bells, the lights
Of sound of flame
Weave spell which ceaselessly recites
To thee a name,
And smiles which thou canst not forget
For thee are suns which never set.

THE WAY TO SING.



HE birds must know. Who wisely sings
Will sing as they ;
The common air has generous wings,
Songs make their way.

No messenger to run before,
Devising plan ;
No mention of the place or hour
To any man ;
No waiting till some sound betrays
A listening ear ;
No different voice, no new delays,
If steps draw near.

“What bird is that? Its song is good.”
And eager eyes
Go peering through the dusky wood,
In glad surprise.
Then late at night, when by his fire
The traveller sits,
Watching the flame grow brighter, higher,
The sweet song flits
By snatches through his weary brain
To help him rest ;
When next he goes that road again,
An empty nest
On leafless bough will make him sigh,
“Ah me ! last spring
Just here I heard, in passing by,
That rare bird sing !”

But while he sighs, remembering
How sweet the song,
The little bird on tireless wing,
Is borne along

In other air, and other men
 With weary feet,
On other roads, the simple strain
 Are finding sweet.
The birds must know. Who wisely sings
 Will sing as they;
The common air has generous wings,
 Songs make their way.

THE TRUE BALLAD OF THE KING'S
SINGER.



HE king rode fast, the king rode well,
 The royal hunt went loud and gay,
A thousand bleeding chamois fell
 For royal sport that day.

When sunset turned the hills all red,
 The royal hunt went still and slow;
The king's great horse with weary tread
 Plunged ankle-deep in snow.

Sudden a strain of music sweet,
 Unearthly sweet, came through the wood;
Up sprang the king, and on both feet
 Straight in his saddle stood.

“ Now, by our lady, be it bird,
Or be it man or elf who plays,
Never before my ears have heard
A music fit for praise ! ”

Sullen and tired, the royal hunt
Followed the king, who tracked the song,
Unthinking, as is royal wont,
How hard the way and long.

Stretched on a rock the shepherd lay
And dreamed and piped, and dreamed and sang,
And careless heard the shout and bay
With which the echoes rang.

“ Up, man ! the king ! ” the hunters cried.
He slowly stood, and, wondering,
Turned honest eyes from side to side :
To him, each looked like king.

Strange shyness seized the king's bold tongue ;
He saw how easy to displease
This savage man who stood among
His courtiers, so at ease.

But kings have silver speech to use
When on their pleasure they are bent ;
The simple shepherd could not choose ;
Like one in dream he went.

O hear ! O hear ! The ringing sound
Of twenty trumpets swept the street,

The king a minstrel now has found,
For royal music meet.

With cloth of gold, and cloth of red,
And woman's eyes the place is bright.
"Now, shepherd, sing," the king has said,
"The song you sang last night!"

One faint sound stirs the perfumed air,
The courtiers scornfully look down;
The shepherd kneels in dumb despair,
Seeing the king's dark frown.

The king is just; the king will wait.
"Ho, guards! let him be gently led,
Let him grow used to royal state, —
To being housed and fed."

All night the king unquiet lay,
Racked by his dream's presentiment;
Then rose in haste at break of day,
And for the shepherd sent.

"Ho now, thou beast, thou savage man,
How sound thou sleepest, not to hear!"
They jeering laughed, but soon began
To louder call in fear.

They wrenched the bolts; unrumped stood
The princely bed all silken fine,
Untouched the plates of royal food,
The flask of royal wine!

The costly robes strewn on the floor,
The chamber empty, ghastly still ;
The guards stood trembling at the door,
And dared not cross the sill.

All night the sentinels their round
Had kept. No man could pass that way.
The window dizzy high from ground ;
Below, the deep moat lay.

They crossed themselves. "The foul fiend lurks
In this," they said. They did not know
The miracles sweet Freedom works,
To let her children go.

It was the fiend himself who took
That shepherd's shape to pipe and sing ;
And every man with terror shook,
For who would tell the king !

The heads of men all innocent
Rolled in the dust that day ;
And east and west the bloodhounds went,
Baying their dreadful bay ;

Safe on a snow too far, too high,
For scent of dogs or feet of men,
The shepherd watched the clouds sail by,
And dreamed and sang again ;

And crossed himself, and knelt and cried,
And kissed the holy Edelweiss,

Believing that the fiends had tried
To buy him with a price.

The king rides fast, the king rides well ;
The summer hunts go loud and gay ;
The courtiers, who this tale can tell,
Are getting old and gray.

But still they say it was a fiend
That took a shepherd's shape to sing,
For still the king's heart is not weaned
To care for other thing.

Great minstrels come from far and near,
He will not let them sing or play,
But waits and listens still to hear
The song he heard that day.

ÆNONE.



WOE to thee, Ænone ! stricken blind
And poisoned by a darkness and a pain,
O, woe to thee, Ænone ! who couldst find
No love when love lay dying, doubly slain
Slain thus by thee, Ænone !

O, what stain,
Of red like this on hands of love was seen
Ever before or since, since love has been !

O, woe to thee, C  none ! Hadst thou said,
“ Sweet love, lost love, I know now why I live
And could not die, the days I wished me dead ;
O love, all strength of life and joy I give
Thee back ! Ah me, that I have dared to strive
With fates that bore me to this one sure bliss,
Thou couldst not rob me, O lost love, of this ? ” —

Hadst thou said this, C  none, though he went
Bounding with life, thy life, and left thee there
Dying and glad, such sudden pain had rent
His heart, that even beating in the fair
White arms of Helen, hid in her sweet hair,
It had made always moan, in strange unrest,
“ C  none’s love was greater love, was best.”

MALVERN, December 13.

[“ Paris, the son of Priam, was wounded by one of the poisoned arrows of Hercules that Philoctetes bore to the siege of Troy, whereupon he had himself borne up into Ida, that he might see the nymph C  none, whom he once had loved, because she who knew many secret things alone could heal him ; but when he had seen her and spoken with her, she would deal with the matter in no wise, whereupon Paris died of that hurt.”]



EXILE.



EN may be banished, and a blood-price
set,
Tracking their helpless steps in every
land,

Arming against their life each base man's hand,
But light and air and memory are met
In holy league, to help and save them yet,
From all of death which souls cannot withstand :
The subtlest cruelty which ever planned,
Can never make them pray they may forget
Because they are forgotten.

They may go,
Driven of earth and tossed by salt sea's foam,
Till every breath one slow dull pain become ;
It is not exile. Only exiles know :
Nor distance makes, nor nearness saves the blow ;
The exile had of exile died at home.

MY SHIP.



Y brothers' ships sail out by night, by day ;
My brothers' feet run merry on the shore,
They need not weep, believing they no
more

Shall find the loved ones who have sailed away,

So frequent go their ships, to-morrow may
See one return for them.

The ship that bore
My loved from me lies where she lay before ;
My heart grows sick within me as I pray
The silent skipper, morn by morn, if he
Will sail before the night.

With patient tread
I bear him all my goods. I cannot see
What more is left that could be stripped from me,
But still the silent skipper shakes his head :
Ah me ! I think I never shall be dead !

AT LAST.



THE years I lost before I knew you,
Love !
O, the hills I climbed and came not to you,
Love !

Ah ! who shall render unto us to make
Us glad,
The things which for and of each other's sake
We might have had ?

If you and I had sat and played together,
Love,
Two speechless babies in the summer weather,
Love,

By one sweet brook which, though it dried up long
 Ago,
Still makes for me to-day a sweeter song
 Than all I know, —

If hand in hand through the mysterious gateway,
 Love,
Of womanhood, we had first looked and straightway,
 Love,
Had whispered to each other softly, ere
 It yet
Was dawn, what now in noonday heat and fear
 We both forget, —

If all of this had given its completeness,
 Love,
To every hour would it be added sweetness,
 Love? •
Could I know sooner whether it were well
 Or ill
With thee? One wish could I more surely tell,
 More swift fulfil?

Ah ! vainly thus I sit and dream and ponder,
 Love,
Losing the precious present while I wonder,
 Love,
About the days in which you grew and came
 To be
So beautiful, and did not know the name
 Or sight of me.

But all lost things are in the angels' keeping,
 Love ;
 No past is dead for us, but only sleeping,
 Love ;
 The years of Heaven will all earth's little pain
 Make good, .
 Together there we can begin again
 In babyhood.

NEW YORK, February 15, 1870.

MEMOIR OF A QUEEN.



ER name, before she was a queen, boots
 not.

When she was crowned, her kingdom said,
 " The Queen ! "

And, after that, all other names too mean
 By far had seemed. Perhaps all were forgot,
 Save " Queen, sweet queen."

Such pitiable lot

As till her birth her kingdom had, was seen
 Never in all fair lands, so torn between
 False grasping powers, that toiled and fought, but got
 No peace.

 All curious search is wholly vain
 For written page or stone whereon occurs
 A mention of the kingdom which obeyed
 This sweet queen's rule. But centuries have laid
 No dead queen down in royal sepulchres
 Whose reign was greater or more blest than hers.

RENUNCIATION.



WHEREFORE thus, apart with drooping wings
Thou stillest, saddest angel,
With hidden face, as if but bitter things
Thou hadst, and no evangel
Of good tidings ?

Thou know'st that through our tears
Of hasty, selfish weeping,
Comes surer sun ; and for our petty fears
Of loss, thou hast in keeping
A greater gain than all of which we dreamed.
Thou knowest that in grasping
The bright possessions which so precious seemed,
We lose them ; but, if clasping
Thy faithful hand, we tread with steadfast feet
The path of thy appointing,
There waits for us a treasury of sweet
Delight ; royal anointing
With oil of gladness and of strength !

O, things

Of Heaven, Christ's evangel
Bearing, call us with shining face and poised wings,
Thou sweetest, dearest angel !

BURNT SHIPS.



LOVE, sweet Love, who came with rosy
sail

And foaming prow across the misty sea !

O Love, brave Love, whose faith was full
and free

That lands of sun and gold, which could not fail,
Lay in the west, that bloom no wintry gale

Could blight, and eyes whose love thine own should
be,

Called thee, with steadfast voice of prophecy,
To shores unknown !

O Love, poor Love, avail

Thee nothing now thy faiths, thy braveries ;

There is no sun, no bloom ; a cold wind strips

The bitter foam from off the wave where dips

No more thy prow ; the eyes are hostile eyes ;

The gold is hidden ; vain thy tears and cries ;

O Love, poor Love, why didst thou burn thy ships ?



TRANSPLANTED.



HEN Christ, the Gardener, said, "These
many years
Behold how I have waited
For fruit upon this barren tree, which bears
But leaves ! With unabated
Patience I have nurtured it ; have fed
Its roots with choicest juices ;
The sweetest suns their tender warmth have shed
On it ; still it refuses
Its blossom ; all the balmiest summer rain
Has bathed it ; unrepaying,
Still, its green and glittering leaves, in vain
And empty show arraying,
It flaunts, contented in its uselessness,
Ever my eye offending.
Uproot it ! Set it in the wilderness !
There no more gentle tending
Shall it receive ; but, pricked by nettle stings,
And bruised and hurt, and crowded
By stones, and weeds, and noxious growths of things
That kill, and chilled 'neath shrouded
And sunless skies, from whose black clouds no rain
Shall fall to soothe its anguish,
Bearing the utmost it can feel of pain,
Unsuccored, it shall languish ! "

When next across the wilderness Christ came,
Seeking his Royal Garden,

A tree stood in his pathway, all aflame,
And bending with its burden
Of burnished gold. No fruit inside the wall
Had grown to such perfection !
It was the outcast tree ! Deprived of all
Kind nurture and protection,
Thrust out among vile things of poisonous growth,
Condemned, disgraced, and banished,
Lonely and scorned, its energies put forth
Anew. All false show vanished ;
Its roots struck downward with determined hold,
No more the surface roaming ;
And from th' unfriendly soil, a thousand-fold
Of yield compelled.

The coming
Of the Gardener now in sweet humility
It waited, trusting, trembling ;
Then Christ, the Gardener, smiled and said :

“ O tree,

This day, in the assembling
Of mine, in Paradise, shalt thou be found.
Henceforth in me abiding,
More golden fruit shalt thou bring forth ; and round
Thy root the living waters gliding
Shall give the greenness which can never fade.
While angels, with thy new name sealing
Thee, shall come, and gather in thy shade
Leaves for the nations' healing ! ”

BEST.



OTHER, I see you with your nursery light,
Leading your babies, all in white,
To their sweet rest ;
Christ, the Good Shepherd, carries mine
to-night,
And that is best.

I cannot help tears, when I see them twine
Their fingers in yours, and their bright curls shine
On your warm breast ;
But the Saviour's is purer than yours or mine,
He can love best !

You tremble each hour because your arms
Are weak ; your heart is wrung with alarms,
And sore opprest ;
My darlings are safe, out of reach of harms,
And that is best.

You know, over yours may hang even now
Pain and disease, whose fulfilling slow
Naught can arrest ;
Mine in God's gardens run to and fro,
And that is best.

You know that of yours, your feeblest one
And dearest may live long years alone,
Unloved, unblest ;

Mine are cherished of saints around God's throne,
And that is best.

You must dread for yours the crime that sears,
Dark guilt unwashed by repentant tears,
And unconfessed ;

Mine entered spotless on eternal years,
O, how much the best !

But grief is selfish ; I cannot see
Always why I should so stricken be,
More than the rest ;
But I know that, as well as for them, for me
God did the best !

MORNING-GLORY.



WINDROUS interlacement !
Holding fast to threads by green and silky
rings,
With the dawn it spreads its white and
purple wings ;
Generous in its bloom, and sheltering while it clings,
Sturdy morning-glory.

Creeping through the casement,
Slanting to the floor in dusty, shining beams,
Dancing on the door in quick, fantastic gleams, .

Comes the new day's light, and pours in tideless
streams,
Golden morning-glory.

In the lowly basement,
Rocking in the sun, the baby's cradle stands ;
Now the little one thrusts out his rosy hands ;
Soon his eyes will open ; then in all the lands
No such morning-glory !

OCTOBER.



ENDING above the spicy woods which
blaze,
Arch skies so blue they flash, and hold the
sun

Immeasurably far ; the waters run
Too slow, so freighted are the river-ways
With gold of elms and birches from the maze
Of forests. Chestnuts, clicking one by one,
Escape from satin burs ; her fringes done,
The gentian spreads them out in sunny days,
And, like late revelers at dawn, the chance
Of one sweet, mad, last hour, all things assail,
And conquering, flush and spin ; while, to enhance
The spell, by sunset door, wrapped in a veil
Of red and purple mists, the summer, pale,
Steals back alone for one more song and dance.

MY BEES.

AN ALLEGORY.



BEES, sweet bees ! ” I said, “ that nearest
field
Is shining white with fragrant immortelles.
Fly swiftly there and drain those honey
wells.”

Then, spicy pines the sunny hive to shield,
I set, and patient for the autumn’s yield
Of sweet I waited.

When the village bells
Rang frosty clear, and from their satin cells
The chestnuts leaped, rejoicing, I unsealed
My hive.

Alas ! no snowy honey there
Was stored. My wicked bees had borne away
Their queen and left no trace.

That very day,-
An idle drone who sauntered through the air
I tracked and followed, and he led me where
My truant bees and stolen honey lay.
Twice faithless bees ! They had sought out to eat
Rank, bitter herbs. The honey was not sweet.

IN THE PASS.



CROSS my road a mountain rose of rock, —
Fierce, naked rock. Its shadow, black and
chill,

Shut out the sun. Gray clouds, which
seemed to mock

With cruel challenges my helpless will,
Sprang up and scaled the steepest crags. The shrill
Winds, two and two, went breathless out and in,
Filling the darkened air with evil din.

I turned away my weary steps and said :
“This must be confine of some fearful place ;
Here is no path for mortal man to tread.
Who enters here will tremble, face to face
With powers of darkness, whose unearthly race
In cloud and wind and storm delights to dwell,
Ruling them all by an uncanny spell.”

The guide but smiled, and, holding fast my hand,
Compelled me up a path I had not seen.
It wound round ledges where I scarce could stand ;
It plunged to sudden sunless depths between
Immeasurable cliffs, which seemed to lean
Together, closing as we passed, like door
Of dungeon which would open nevermore.

I said again : “I will not go. This way
Is not for mortal feet.” Again the guide

But smiled, and I again could but obey.
The path grew narrow ; thundering by its side,
As loud as ocean at its highest tide,
A river rushed, all black, and green, and white,
A boiling stream of molten malachite.

Sudden I heard a joyous cry, " Behold, behold ! "
And, smiling still on me, the good guide turned,
And pointed where broad, sunny fields unrolled
And spread like banners ; green, so green it burned,
And lit the air like red ; and blue which yearned
From all the lofty dome of sky, and bent
And folded low and circling like a tent ;

And forests ranged like armies, round and round,
At feet of mountains of eternal snow ;
And valleys all alive with happy sound ;
The song of birds ; swift brooks' delicious flow ;
The mystic hum of million things that grow ;
The stir of men ; and gladdening every way,
Voices of little children at their play ;

And shining banks of flowers which words refuse
To paint ; such colors as in summer light
The rarest, fleetest summer rainbows use,
But set in gold of sun, and silver white
Of dew, as thick as gems which blind the sight
On altar fronts, inlaid with priceless things,
The jewelled gifts of centuries of kings.

Then, sitting half in dream, and half in fear
Of how such wondrous miracle were wrought,

Thy name, dear friend, I sudden seemed to hear
Through all the charmed air.

My loving thought
Through patient years had vainly groped and sought,
And found no hidden thing so rare, so good,
That it might furnish thy similitude.

O noble soul, whose strengths like mountains stand,
Whose purposes, like adamantine stone,
Bar roads to feeble feet, and wrap the land
In seeming shadow, thou, too, hast thine own
Sweet valleys full of flowers, for me alone,
Unseen, unknown, undreamed of by the mass,
Who do not know the secret of the Pass.

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, AMPEZZO PASS, June 22, 1869.

AMREETA WINE.



HE rose up from the golden feast,
And her voice rang like the sea ;
“ Sir Knight, put down thy glass and come
To the battlement with me.

“ That was a charmed wine thou drank'st,
Signed white from heaven, signed black from hell.
Alas ! alas ! for the bitter thing
The sign hath forced thy lips to tell ! ”

“Ho here ! Ho there ! Lift up and bear
My choice wine out,” she said ;
“That which hath brand of a clasping hand,
And the seal blood-red.”

“Ho here ! Ho there ! To the castle stair
Bear all that branded wine ;
And dash it far, where the breakers are
Whitest, of the brine !

“Let no man dare to shrink or spare,
Or one red drop to spill ;
Of the endless pain of that wine’s hot stain
Let the salt sea bear its fill.

“O woe of mine ! O woe of thine !
O woe of endless thirst !
O woe for the Amreeta wine,
By fate and thee accurst !”

The knight spake words of sore dismay
But her face was white like stone ;
She saw him mount and ride away,
And made no moan.

The wind blew east, the wind blew west,
The airs from sepulchres ;
No royal heart in all of them
So dead as hers !

OPPORTUNITY.



DO not know if, climbing some steep hill
Through fragrant wooded pass, this glimpse
I bought ;

Or whether in some midday I was caught
To upper air, where visions of God's will
In pictures to our quickened sense fulfil
His word. But this I saw :

A path I sought
Through wall of rock. No human fingers wrought
The golden gates which opened, sudden, still,
And wide. My fear was hushed by my delight.
Surpassing fair the lands ; my path lay plain ;
Alas ! so spell-bound, feasting on the sight,
I paused, that I but reached the threshold bright,
When, swinging swift, the golden gates again
Were rocky walls, by which I wept in vain !

WHEN THE BABY DIED.

I.



WHEN the baby died,

On every side

White lilies and blue violets were strown ;
Unreasoning, the mother's heart made
moan :

“Who counted all these flowers which have grown
Unhindered in their bloom?
Was there not room,
O Earth, and God, couldst thou not care
For mine a little longer? Fare
Thy way, O Earth! All life, all death
For me ceased with my baby's breath;
All Heaven I forget or doubt.
Within, without,
Is idle chance, more pitiless than law.”
And that was all the mother saw.

II.

When the baby died,
On every side
Rose strangers' voices, hard and harsh and loud.
The baby was not wrapped in any shroud.
The mother made no sound. Her head was bowed
That men's eyes might not see
Her misery;
But in her bitter heart she said,
“Ah me! 't is well that he is dead,
My boy for whom there was no food.
If there were God, and God were good,
All human hearts at least might keep
The right to weep
Their dead. There is no God, but cruel law.”
And that was all the mother saw.

III.

When the baby died,
 On every side
 Swift angels came in shining, singing bands,
 And bore the little one, with gentle hands,
 Into the sunshine of the spirit lands.
 And Christ the Shepherd said,
 "Let them be led
 In gardens nearest to the earth.
 One mother weepeth over birth,
 Another weepeth over death ;
 In vain all Heaven answereth.
 Laughs from the little ones may reach
 Their ears, and teach
 Them what, so blind with tears, they never saw, —
 That of all life, all death, God's love is law."

"OLD LAMPS FOR NEW."



SOUL! wert thou a poor maid-servant,
 weak
 And foolish, and unknowing how the walls
 Of shining stones and silver, and fine gold,
 Which made our dwelling glorious, our life
 Assured, were built, that thou must spring at call
 Of our most deadly foe, lured by the sound

And glitter of his hollow brass, and give
 Into his treacherous hands our all ?

And now

For thee and me remaineth nothing more,
 But cold and hunger and the desert !

Soul,

Rise up and follow him, and tarry not,
 Nor dare to call thy life thine own, until
 Thou hast waylaid and slain him sitting at his feast,
 And laid our talisman once more upon my breast !

FEAST.



OR days when guests unbidden
 Walk in my sun,
 With steps that roam unchidden,
 And overrun
 My vines and flowers, and hands
 That rob on all my lands, —
 For such days, still there stands
 One banquet, one !

One banquet which, spread under
 A magic mist,
 I taste, until they wonder
 What light has kissed
 My eyes, and where the grapes
 Have hung, whose red escapes
 In mounting, mantling shapes,
 And heats my wrist.

Crowned with its rosy flowers,
 Pouring its wine,
Glide faithful ghosts of hours
 Long dead : no sign
They show of death, or chill,
But glowing, smiling still,
Love's utmost joy fulfil
 At word of mine.

And ringeth through my garden,
 The tireless pace
Of silver-mailed warden,
 With eastward face,
Who calmly bides the night,
And in each first, red light,
Reads prophecy aright
 Of that day's grace,

When guests that are unbidden
 Shall all have ceased ;
And thy dear arms unchidden,
 My love, my priest,
Shall hold me while the hours
That were, and are, fling flowers,
And Hope, the warden, pours
 Wine for our feast.



TWO SUNDAYS.

I.



BABY, alone, in a lowly door,
Which climbing woodbine made still lower,
Sat playing with lilies in the sun.
The loud church-bells had just begun ;
The kitten pounced in the sparkling grass
At stealthy spiders that tried to pass ;
The big watch-dog kept a threatening eye
On me, as I lingered, walking by.

The lilies grew high, and she reached up
On tiny tiptoes to each gold cup ;
And laughed aloud, and talked, and clapped
Her small, brown hands, as the tough stems snapped,
And flowers fell till the broad hearthstone
Was covered, and only the topmost one
Of the lilies left. In sobered glee
She said to herself, " That's older than me ! "

II.

Two strong men through the lowly door,
With uneven steps, the baby bore ;
They had set the bier on the lily bed ;
The lily she left was crushed and dead.
The slow, sad bells had just begun,

The kitten crouched, afraid, in the sun ;
 And the poor watch-dog, in bewildered pain,
 Took no notice of me as I joined the train.

SHOWBREAD.



PAST imaged pillars, wrought of fir and palm,
 Past bright pomegranates, swinging on their
 chain,

And bars of Tyrian cedar, overlain
 With gold, and past the molten sea whose calm
 Waves drink the offerings of spice and balm,
 Lit by the seven sacred lamps whose rain
 Of fragrant fire the almond bowls detain,
 Past clear-eyed cherubim, without alarm,
 And into shadow of the mercy-seat
 We pressed.

No priest with onyx-stones to meet
 Us there ! Alone our hunger, face to face
 With God, ate of the showbread, sacred, sweet ;
 And listening, heard these words of heavenly grace,—
 “One greater than the temple fills this place.”



TIDES.



PATIENT shore, that canst not go to meet
Thy love, the restless sea, how comfortest
Thou all thy loneliness? Art thou at rest,
When, loosing his strong arms from round
thy feet,

He turns away? Know'st thou, however sweet
That other shore may be, that to thy breast
He must return? And when in sterner test
He folds thee to a heart which does not beat,
Wraps thee in ice, and gives no smile, no kiss,
To break long wintry days, still dost thou miss
Naught from thy trust? Still wait, unfaltering,
The higher, warmer waves which leap in spring?
O sweet, wise shore, to be so satisfied!
O heart, learn from the shore! Love has a tide!

TRIBUTE.

R. W. E.



MIDWAY in summer, face to face, a king
I met. No king so gentle and so wise.
He calls no man his subject; but his eyes,
In midst of benediction, questioning,
Each soul compel. A first-fruits offering

Each soul must owe to him whose fair land lies
Wherever God has his. No white dove flies
Too white, no wine too red and rich, to bring.
With sudden penitence for all her waste,
My soul to yield her scanty hoards made haste,
When lo ! they shrank and failed me in that need,
Like wizard's gold, by worthless dust replaced.
My speechless grief, the king, with tender heed,
Thus soothed : " These ashes sow. They are true
seed."

O king ! in other summer may I stand
Before thee yet, the full ear in my hand !

"ALMS AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE."



H, how shall we, lame from the mother's
womb,
The temple enter ! Beautiful in vain
For us, the gate, where we, in double pain,
Of suffering and of loss, can find no room ;
Whose whiteness only makes our outer gloom
The blacker, and whose shining steps, more plain
Than words, mock cripples weeping to attain
The inner courts, where censers, sweet perfume,
And music fill the air !

O sinful fear !

Dare not to doubt. Our helplessness laid near
That gate, is safe ; our faith without alarms
Can wait ; the good apostles will appear ;

Our crippled beggary, made rich by alms
Of God, shall run and leap and praise, in grateful
psalms.

CORONATION.



T the king's gate the subtle noon
Wove filmy yellow nets of sun ;
Into the drowsy snare too soon
The guards fell one by one.

Through the king's gate, unquestioned then,
A beggar went, and laughed, "This brings
Me chance, at last, to see if men
Fare better, being kings."

The king sat bowed beneath his crown,
Propping his face with listless hand ;
Watching the hour-glass sifting down
Too slow its shining sand.

"Poor man, what wouldst thou have of me ?"
The beggar turned, and, pitying,
Replied, like one in dream, "Of thee,
Nothing. I want the king."

Uprose the king, and from his head
Shook off the crown and threw it by.
"O man, thou must have known," he said,
"A greater king than I."

Through all the gates, unquestioned then,
Went king and beggar hand in hand.
Whispered the king, " Shall I know when
Before *his* throne I stand ? "

The beggar laughed. Free winds in haste
Were wiping from the king's hot brow
The crimson lines the crown had traced.
" This is his presence now."

At the kings's gate, the crafty noon
Unwove its yellow nets of sun ;
Out of their sleep in terror soon
The guards waked one by one.

" Ho here ! Ho there ! Has no man seen
The king ? " The cry ran to and fro ;
Beggar and king, they laughed, I ween,
The laugh that free men know.

On the king's gate the moss grew gray ;
The king came not. They called him dead ;
And made his eldest son one day
Slave in his father's stead.



MY NEW FRIEND.



SHALLOW voice said, bitterly, "New friend !"

As if the old alone were true, and, born
Of sudden freak, the new deserved but
scorn

And deep distrust.

If love could condescend,
What scorn in turn ! Do men old garments mend
With new ? And put the new wine, red at morn,
Into the last year's bottles, thin and worn ?
But love and loving need not to defend
Themselves. The new is older than the old ;
And newest friend is oldest friend in this,
That, waiting him, we longest grieved to miss
One thing we sought.

I think when I behold
Full Heaven, I shall not say, " Why was this never
told ?"

But, " Ah ! this is not new. From first I saw this
bliss."



LOVE'S FULFILLING.



LOVE is weak
Which counts the answers and the
gains,
Weighs all the losses and the pains,
And eagerly each fond word drains
A joy to seek.

When Love is strong,
It never tarries to take heed,
Or know if its return exceed
Its gift ; in its sweet haste no greed,
No strifes belong.

It hardly asks
If it be loved at all ; to take
So barren seems, when it can make
Such bliss, for the beloved sake,
Of bitter tasks.

Its ecstasy
Could find hard death so beauteous,
It sees through tears how Christ loved us,
And speaks, in saying " I love thus,"
No blasphemy.

So much we miss
If love is weak, so much we gain

If love is strong, God thinks no pain
 Too sharp or lasting to ordain
 To teach us this.

WOOED.

I.



WITH voice all confident, I knelt and cried,
 "Beho'd me at thy feet, O darling queen !
 I kiss, round lowest hem, thy robe of
 green ;

In all thy temples I have prophesied,
 And cast out devils in thy name. Confide
 In me. Lift up the veil that hangs between
 My eyes and thy dear face. Tell me what mean
 The voices of thy people."

Far and wide
 The lovely queen's sweet kingdoms lie. I found
 My way to follow her to utmost bound
 Of all ; and listened, listened, nights and days,
 To every smallest sound on her highways ;
 But could not once her golden sceptre reach,
 Nor win the secret of her people's speech.



WON.

II.



EARIED at last, and sad, I cried, "Refuse
Me what thou wilt, my queen! At thy
dear feet !

Henceforth I lie and sleep, and dream, and
eat

Thy locusts and wild honey. Thou mayst choose,
Perhaps, that I the latchet of thy shoes
One day unfasten. Ever incomplete
Leave my desire, too bold, to see thy sweet,
Unveiled face ; to know what words they use
Who serve around thy throne."

Lo ! as I lay,

In such surrender, on that summer day,
And sought not, stirred not, came the radiant queen,
Sweeping me with her robe of leafy green,
And kissed me everywhere that kiss could go ;
While all her royal train I longed to know,
The swallow leading, crowded up to teach
Me all the secrets of their song and speech.



ARIADNE'S FAREWELL.



HE daughter of a king, how should I know
That there were tinsels wearing face of gold,
And worthless glass, which in the sunlight's
hold

Could shameless answer back my diamond's glow
With cheat of kindred fire? The currents slow,
And deep, and strong, and stainless, which had rolled
Through royal veins for ages, what had told
To them, that hasty heat and lie could show
As quick and warm a red as theirs?

Go free!

The sun is breaking on the sea's blue shield
Its golden lances; by their gleam I see
Thy ship's white sails. Go free, if scorn can yield
Thee freedom!

Then, alone, my love and I, —
We both are royal; we know how to die.

THOUGHT.



MESSENGER, art thou the king, or I?
Thou dalliest outside the palace gate
Till on thine idle armor lie the late
And heavy dews: the morn's bright, scorn-
ful eye

Reminds thee; then, in subtle mockery,

Thou smilest at the window where I wait,
 Who bade thee ride for life. In empty state
 My days go on, while false hours prophesy
 Thy quick return ; at last, in sad despair,
 I cease to bid thee, leave thee free as air ;
 When lo, thou stand'st before me glad and fleet,
 And lay'st undreamed-of treasures at my feet.
 Ah ! messenger, thy royal blood to buy,
 I am too poor. Thou art the king, not I.

MORDECAI.



MAKE friends with him ! He is of royal line,
 Although he sits in rags. Not all of thine
 Array of splendor, pomp of high estate,
 Can buy him from his place within the gate,
 The king's gate of thy happiness, where he,
 Yes, even he, the Jew, remaineth free,
 Never obeisance making, never scorn
 Betraying of thy silver and new-born
 Delight. Make friends with him, for unawares
 The charmed secret of thy joys he bears ;
 Be glad, so long as his black sackcloth, late
 And early, thwarts thy sun ; for if in hate
 And haste thou plottest for his blood, thy own death
 cry,
 Not his, comes from the gallows fifty cubits high.

LOCUSTS AND WILD HONEY.



HOSPITABLE wilderness,
I know thy secret sign ;
All human welcome seemeth less
To me than thine.

Such messengers to show me where
Is water for my feet ;
Such perfume poured upon my hair,
Costly and sweet.

Such couch, such canopy, such floor,
Such royal banquet spread ;
Such music through the open door,
So little said.

So much bestowed and understood,
Such flavored courtesy,
And only kings of unmixed blood
For company.

Such rhythmic tales of ancient lores,
Of sweet and hidden things,
Rehearsed by sacred troubadours
On tireless wings.

Such secrets of dominion set
Unstinted for my choice,

Such mysteries, unuttered yet,
Waiting a voice.

O hospitable wilderness,
For thee I long and pine ;
All human welcome seemeth less
To me than thine.

A MOTHER'S FAREWELL TO A VOYAGER.

"—— sends love and good-by. She thinks she sees the four quarters of the globe when she looks into the faces of her four children. November 2, 1868."



AIL east, sail west, O wanderer,
In east, in west, you cannot see
Such suns as rise and set in these
Four little faces round my knee.

Blue as the north my first-born's eyes ;
Her yellow hair hides brow of snow ;
Like conquerors from the North she brought
The sweet subjection mothers know.

Glad and sad, and changed in an hour,
My next girl's face is tropic sea,
Where laden winds, whose secret none
Can tell, sweep on unceasingly.

Grave and searching, with hidden fire,
 My black-eyed boy kneels like a priest ;
 I know that, looking where he looks,
 We shall see the "Star in the East."

No name as yet my baby has,
 Her rosy hands are just uncurled ;
 But with wet eyes we kiss her cheeks,
 And thank God for our sweet "new world."

Sail east, sail west, dear wanderer !
 God cares for you and cares for me ;
 He knows for which of us 't was best
 To stay with children round her knee.

STEAMSHIP CHINA, November 12, 1868.

"DROPPED DEAD."



ALL royal strengths in life, until the end,
 Will bear themselves still royally. Degrees
 Of dying they know not : the muddy lees
 They will not drink : no man shall see
 them bend

Or slacken in the storm : no man can lend
 To them. Those feeble souls who crouch on knees
 That fail, and cling to shadows of lost ease,
 Death tortures. But, as kings to kings may send,
 He challenges the strong.

Such death as this

O'ertakes great love ; a lesser love will miss
Such stroke ; may dwindle painfully away,
And fade, and simply cease to breathe, some day.
But great loves, to the last, have pulses red ;
All great loves that have ever died dropped dead.

PRESENCE.



NAMELESS thing ! which art and art not ;
spell

Whose bond can bind the powers of the air,
Compelling them thy face to hide or bear.

O voice ! which, bringing not the faintest swell
Of sound, canst in the air so crowd and dwell
That all sounds die. O sight ! which needst no share
Of sun, which sav'st blind eyes from their despair,
O touch ! which dost not touch, and yet canst tell
To waiting flesh, by thy caress complete,
The whole of love, till veins grow red with heat ;
O life of life ! to which graves are not girt
With terror, and all death can bring no hurt.
O mystery of blessing ! never lift
Thy veil ! our one inalienable gift !

POLAR DAYS.



AS some poor piteous Lapp, who under firs
Which bend and break with load of arctic
snows
Has crept and crouched to watch when
crimson glows
Begin, feels in his veins the thrilling stirs
Of warmer life, e'en while his fear deters
His trust; and when the orange turns to rose
In vain, and widening to the westward goes
The ruddy beam and fades, heartsick defers
His hope, and shivers through one more long night
Of sunless day ; —

So watching, one by one,
The faintest glimmers of the morn's gray light,
The sleepless exiled heart waits for the bright
Full day, and hopes till all its hours are done,
That the next one will bring its love, its sun.

TRUTH.



TRUTH, art thou relentless? Wilt thou
rest
Never? From solitude to solitude
Eternally wilt thou escape? Thy good
And beauty luring us to fatal quest,
Foredoomed to endless loss?

O royal guest
 Of Nature's centuries, no spot so rude,
 So void, thy secret cannot there elude
 Our grasp ; no thing too subtle to attest
 Her royal sheltering ; from spheres to spheres
 Of light, through the incalculable years ;
 From force to force, through rock, through sound,
 through flame,
 Our worship wrests but echo of thy name,
 And builds at last, with patient stone, and sod,
 And tears, its altar "to the unknown God."

HER EYES.



THAT they are brown, no man will dare to
 say
 He knows. And yet I think that no man's
 look

Ever those depths of light and shade forsook,
 Until their gentle pain warned him away.
 Of all sweet things I know but one which may
 Be likened to her eyes.

When, in deep nook
 Of some green field, the water of a brook
 Makes lingering, whirling eddy in its way,
 Round soft drowned leaves ; and in a flash of sun
 They turn to gold, until the ripples run

Now brown, now yellow, changing as by some
Swift spell.

I know not with what body come
The saints. But this I know, my Paradise
Will mean the resurrection of her eyes.

THE WALL-FLOWER OF THE RUINS OF ROME.



GOLDEN-WINGED, on guard at crum-
bled gate
And fallen wall of emperors and kings,
Whose very names are now forgotten things,
Thou standest here, in faithfulness to wait
The centuries through, and of the ancient state
Keep up the semblance. Never footstep rings
Across the stones ; and yet, if sun but flings
One ray, a gleam, like gleam of burnished plate
On mailed men, thy hands have lit, and sent
Along the gray and tottering battlement,
And flung out yellow banners, pricked with red,
Which need not shame a royal house to spread.
Ah, golden-winged, the whole of thy deep spell
I cannot fathom, and thou wilt not tell.

ROME, ITALY, May 7, 1869.

TO A. C. L. B.



THY house hath gracious freedom, like the
 air
 Of open fields ; its silence hath a speech
 Of royal welcome to the friends who reach
 Its threshold, and its upper chambers bear,
 Above their doors such spells, that, entering there
 And laying off the dusty garments, each
 Soul whispers to herself : "'T were like a breach
 Of reverence in a temple could I dare
 Here speak untruth, here wrong my inmost thought.
 Here I grow strong and pure ; here I may yield,
 Without shamefacedness, the little brought
 From out my poorer life, and stand revealed,
 And glad, and trusting, in the sweet and rare
 And tender presence which hath filled this air."

SNOW-DROPS IN ITALY.



LOYAL vestals in this land of sun,
 Your white cheeks flush not, and your virgin
 eyes
 Vouchsafe no lifted look. In vain the skies
 Are red and pale with passion ; swift clouds run
 And beckon ; warm winds call ; long days are done
 And nights are spent, and still by no surprise,
 No lure can ye be tempted !

O, where lies
 The spell by which your gentleness can shun
 These heats? Is it your hidden zone of gold?
 Or in the emerald whose glimmers show,
 Scarce show, beneath your white robes' inner fold?
 Vain question! Still your calm bright peace ye hold;
 And yet ye set my pulses all aglow
 With loyalty like yours to lands of snow.

ROME, January 14, 1869.

DISTANCE.



SUBTILE secret of the air,
 Making the things that are not, fair
 Beyond the things that we can reach
 And name with names of clumsy speech;
 By shadow-worlds of purple haze
 The sunniest of sunny days
 Outweighing in our hearts' delight;
 Opening the eyes of blinded sight;
 Holding an echo in such hold,
 Bidding a hope such wings unfold,
 That present sounds and sights between
 Can come and go, unheard, unseen, —
 O subtile secret of the air,
 Heaven itself is heavenly fair
 By help of thee! The saints' good days
 Are good, because the good Lord lays
 No bound of shore along the sea
 Of beautiful Eternity.

WHEN THE KINGS COME.



WHEN the Kings come to royal hunting-seats
 To find the royal joys of summer days,
 The servants on the lofty watch-tower raise
 A banner, whose swift token warning greets
 The country. Threatening stern, an armed man
 meets
 Each stranger, who, by pleasant forest-ways,
 All unawares, has rambled till he strays
 Too close to paths where, in the noonday heats,
 The King, uncrowned, lies down to sleep. Such law
 As this the human soul sets heart and face
 And hand, when once its King has come. In awe,
 And gladness too, all men behold what grace
 Such royal presence to the eye can bring,
 And how the heart and hand can guard their King.

BEREHTESGADEN, BAVARIA, July 20, 1869.

COMING ACROSS.



VERY sail is full set, and the sky
 And the sea blaze with light,
 And the moon mid her virgins glides on
 As St. Ursula might;
 And the throb of the pulse never stops,
 In the heart of the ship,

As her measures of water and fire
She drinks down at a sip.
Yet I never can think, as I lie,
And so wearily toss,
That by saint, or by star, or by ship,
I am coming across ;

But by light which I know in dear eyes
That are bent on the sea,
And the touch I remember of hands
That are waiting for me.
By the light of the eyes I could come,
If the stars should all fail ;
And I think, if the ship should go down,
That the hands would prevail.
Ah ! my darlings, you never will know
How I pined in the loss
Of you all, and how breathless and glad
I am coming across.

STEAMSHIP RUSSIA, January 22, 1870.

THE TEACHER.



HE people listened, with short, indrawn
breath,
And eyes that were too steady set for tears.
This one man's speech rolled off great loads
of fears
From every heart, as sunlight scattereth

The clouds ; hard doubts, which had been born of death,

Shone out as rain-drops shine when rainbow clears
The air. "O teacher," then I said, "thy years,
Are they not joy? Each word that issueth
From out thy lips, doth it return to bless
Thy own heart many fold?"

With weariness
Of tone he answered, and almost with scorn,
"I am, of all, most lone in loneliness ;
I starve with hunger treading out their corn ;
I die of travail while their souls are born."

DECORATION DAY.

I.



HE Eastern wizards do a wondrous thing,
Which travellers, having seen, scarce dare
to tell :

Dropping a seed in earth, by subtle spell
Of hidden heat they force the germ to spring
To instant life and growth ; no faltering
"Twixt leaf and flower and fruit ; they rise and swell
To perfect shape and size, as if there fell
Upon them all which seasons hold and bring.
But Love far greater magic shows to-day :
Lifting its feeble hands, which can but reach

The hands-breadth up, it stretches all the way
From earth to heaven, and, triumphant, each
Sweet wilting blossom sets, before it dies,
Full in the sight of smiling angels' eyes.

II.

But, ah ! the graves which no man names or knows ;
Uncounted graves, which never can be found ;
Graves of the precious "missing," where no sound
Of tender weeping will be heard, where goes
No loving step of kindred. O, how flows
And yearns our thought to them ! More holy ground
Of graves than this, we say, is that whose bound
Is secret till eternity disclose
Its sign.

But Nature knows her wilderness ;
There are no "missing" in her numbered ways.
In her great heart is no forgetfulness.
Each grave she keeps she will adorn, caress.
We cannot lay such wreaths as Summer lays,
And all her days are Decoration Days !



A BURIAL SERVICE.



O this burying
We come alone, — you and I, — not with
our dead,
But with our dearest living ; O, could mortal tread
Be unfaltering !

God knows how we love it,
This we have come to bury ; the eyes smile, — life's
best wine
The hands hold out ! Darling, shall it be yours, or
mine,
To lay the first sod above it ?

But no decaying
Can reach it in this sepulchre, whose stone
Our hearts must make ! To an exceeding glory grown,
This grief, outweighing,

Not even regretting,
It will await us ! Thank God, not being sown
In any dishonor, it will await its own,
Never forgetting !

To Christ's protection
Now let us leave it, — the tomb and the key ! He
Will remember us, if there may ever be
Resurrection !

“ My love, the Oak,
Has died. Never before his name to men
Who, idly questioning, passed by, I spoke.
But thou, — thou lov'st like me ; thy secret woke
My own. Thou know'st to a less lordly thing
The tendrils torn from oaks will never cling.”

FRIENDS.

TO

A. E. P.



E rode a day, from east, from west,
To meet. A year had done its best,
By absence, and by loss of speech,
To put beyond the other's reach
Each heart and life ; but, drawing nigh,
“ Ah ! it is you ! ” “ Yes, it is I ! ”
We said ; and love had been blasphemed
And slain in each, had either deemed
Need of more words, or joy more plain
When eyes had looked in eyes again :
Ah friendship, stronger in thy might
Than time and space, as faith than sight !
Rich festival with thy red wine
My friend and I will keep in courts divine !

THE ROYAL BEGGAR.



MARVEL strange! outside the palace
doors,
And begging humbly from the palace stores,
He stands and waits ; and when a paltry
crust

Is flung, he stoops and picks it from the dust,
And, smiling through his tears, clasps to his breast
The niggard boon ; and, for the moment blest
And fed, is grateful, though the ruby wine
And milk and honey which, by right divine,
Are his, his only, and the crown of gold
God wrought for him, are to his rightful hold
Refused !

Ah Love, dear Love, nowhere on earth
Wanders uncrowned thy peer of royal birth !
Ah Love, great Love ! Denied, thrust out in vain,
Kingly, though beggared ! Blest through all the pain !

MARCH.



BENEATH the sheltering walls the thin snow
clings, —

Dead winter's skeleton, left bleaching,
white,

Disjointed, crumbling, on unfriendly fields.
The inky pools surrender tardily

At noon, to patient herds, a frosty drink
 From jagged rims of ice ; a subtle red
 Of life is kindling every twig and stalk
 Of lowly meadow growths ; the willows wrap
 Their stems in furry white ; the pines grow gray
 A little in the biting wind ; midday
 Brings tiny burrowed creatures, peeping out
 Alert for sun.

Ah March ! we know thou art
 Kind-hearted, spite of ugly looks and threats,
 And, out of sight, art nursing April's violets !

APRIL.




ROBINS call robins in tops of trees ;
 Doves follow doves, with scarlet feet ;
 Frolicking babies, sweeter than these,
 Crowd green corners where highways
 meet.

Violets stir and arbutus wakes,
 Claytonia's rosy bells unfold ;
 Dandelion through the meadow make's
 A royal road, with seals of gold.

Golden and snowy and red the flowers,
 Golden, snowy, and red in vain ;
 Robins call robins through sad showers ;
 The white dove's feet are wet with rain.

For April sobs while these are so glad,
April weeps while these are so gay, —
Weeps like a tired child who had,
Playing with flowers, lost its way.

MAY.

HE voice of one who goes before to make
The paths of June more beautiful, is thine,
Sweet May ! Without an envy of her crown
And bridal ; patient stringing emeralds
And shining rubies for the brows of birch
And maple ; flinging garlands of pure white
And pink, which to their bloom add prophecy ;
Gold cups o'er-filling on a thousand hills
And calling honey-bees ; out of their sleep
The tiny summer harpers with bright wings
Awaking, teaching them their notes for noon ; —
O May, sweet-voiced one, going thus before,
Forever June may pour her warm red wine
Of life and passion, — sweeter days are thine !



TRYST.



OMEWHERE thou awaitest,
And I, with lips un-kissed,
Weep that thus to latest
Thou putt'st off our tryst !

The golden bowls are broken,
The silver cords untwine ;
Almond flowers in token
Have bloomed, — that I am thine !

Others who would fly thee
In cowardly alarms,
Who hate thee and deny thee,
Thou foldest in thine arms !

How shall I entreat thee
No longer to withhold ?
I dare not go to meet thee,
O lover, far and cold !

O lover, whose lips chilling
So many lips have kissed,
Come, even if unwilling,
And keep thy solemn tryst !

THE MAGIC ARMORY.



O man can shut the open door ;
Strange hieroglyphs of mystic lore
Are writ on it from beam to sill ;
The gleams and shapes of weapons fill
Its silent chambers : field and fray
Of centuries have borne away
Its armor to their victories,
And yet to-day the armor lies
Unstained and bright and whole and good,
For each man's utmost hardihood.

All men go freely out and in,
And choose their arms to fight and win ;
But one man goes with silly hands,
And helpless, halting, choosing stands,
And from the glittering, deadly steels,
Fits him with clumsy sword, and deals
A feeble, witless, useless blow,
Which hurts no friend and helps no foe.
Close by his side his brother makes
Swift choice, unerringly, and takes
From those same chambers hilt and blade
With which more magic sword is made
Than that far-famed which armed the hand
Of Lion-Heart in Eastern land.

So fight and fray the centuries,
The right and truth with wrong and lies ;

So men go freely out and in,
 And choose their arms, and lose and win ;
 And none can shut the open door,
 All writ with signs of mystic lore,
 Where weapons stout and old and good
 For each man's utmost hardihood
 Lie ready, countless, priceless, free,
 Within the magic armory.

LIFTED OVER.



S tender mothers guiding baby steps,
 When places come at which the tiny feet
 Would trip, lift up the little ones in arms
 Of love, and set them down beyond the
 harm,

So did Our Father watch the precious boy,
 Led o'er the stones by me, who stumbled of
 Myself, but strove to help my darling on :
 He saw the sweet limbs faltering, and saw
 Rough ways before us, where my arms would fail ;
 So reached from heaven, and lifting the dear child,
 Who smiled in leaving me, He put him down
 Beyond all hurt, beyond my sight, and bade
 Him wait for me ! Shall I not then be glad,
 And, thanking God, press on to overtake ?

MY HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS.



T is so old, the date is dim ;
I hear the wise man vexing him
With effort vain to count and read,
But to his words I give small heed,
Except of pity that so late
He sitteth wrangling in the gate,
When he might come with me inside,
And in such peace and plenty bide.
The constant springs and summers thatch,
With leaves that interlock and match,
Such roof as keeps out fiercest sun
And gentle rain, but one by one
Lets in blue banner-gleams of sky
As pomp of day goes marching by
Under these roofs I lie whole days,
Watching the steady household ways :
Innumerable creatures come
And go, and are far more at home
Than I, who like dumb giant sit
Baffled by all their work and wit.
No smallest of them condescends
To notice me ; their hidden ends
They follow, and above, below,
Across my bulky shape they go,
With swift, sure feet, and subtle eyes,
Too keen and cautious for surprise
In vain I try their love to reach ;

Not one will give me trust or speech.
No second look the furry bee
Gives, as he bustles round, to me ;
Before my eyes slim spiders take
Their silken ladders out and make
No halt, no secret, scaling where
They like, and weaving scaffolds there ;
The beaded ants prick out and in,
Mysterious and dark and thin ;
With glittering spears and gauzy mail
Legions of insects dart and sail,
Swift Bedouins of the pathless air,
Finding rich plunder everywhere ;
Sweet birds, with motion more serene
Than stillest rest, soar up between
The fleecy clouds, then, sinking slow,
Light on my roof. I do not know
That they are there till fluttering
Low sounds, like the unravelling
Of tight-knit web, their soft wings make,
Unfurling further flight to take.
All through my house is set out food,
Ready and plenty, safe and good,
In vessels made of cunning shapes,
Whose liquid spicy sweet escapes
By drops at brims of yellow bowls,
Or tips of trumpets red as coals,
Or cornucopias pink and white,
By millions set in circles tight ;
Red wine turned jelly, and in moulds
Of pointed calyx laid on folds

Of velvet green ; fruit-grains of brown,
Like dusty shower thickly strewn
On underside of fronds, and hid
Unless one lift the carven lid ;
And many things which in my haste
And ignorance I reckon waste,
Unsightly and unclean, I find
Are but delicious food, designed
For travellers who come each day,
And eat, and drink, and go their way.
I am the only one who need
Go hungry where so many feed ;
My birthright of protection lost,
Because of fathers' sins the cost
Is counted in the children's blood :
I starve where once I might have stood
Content and strong as bird or bee,
Feeding like them on flower or tree.
When I have hunger, I must rise
And seek the poisons I despise,
Leaving untouched on every hand
The sweet wild foods of air and land,
And leaving all my happier kin
Of beasts and birds behind to win
The great rewards which only they
Can win who Nature's laws obey.

Under these roofs of waving thatch,
Lying whole days to dream and watch,
I find myself grow more and more
Vassal of summer than before ;

Allegiances I thought were sworn
 For life I break with hate and scorn.
 One thing alone I hope, desire :
 To make my human life come nigher
 The life these lead whose silent gaze
 Reproaches me and all my ways ;
 To glide along as they all glide,
 Submissive and unterrified,
 Without a thought of loss or gain,
 Without a jar of haste or pain,
 And go, without one quickened breath,
 Finding all realms of life, of death,
 But summer hours in sunny lands,
 To my next house not made with hands.

MY STRAWBERRY.



MARVEL, fruit of fruits, I pause
 To reckon thee. I ask what cause
 Set free so much of red from heats
 At core of earth, and mixed such sweets
 With sour and spice : what was that strength
 Which out of darkness, length by length,
 Spun all thy shining thread of vine,
 Netting the fields in bond as thine.
 I see thy tendrils drink by sips
 From grass and clover's smiling lips ;
 I hear thy roots dig down for wells,
 Tapping the meadow's hidden cells ;
 Whole generations of green things,

Descended from long lines of springs,
I see make room for thee to bide
A quiet comrade by their side ;
I see the creeping peoples go
Mysterious journeys to and fro,
Treading to right and left of thee,
Doing thee homage wonderingly.
I see the wild bees as they fare,
Thy cups of honey drink, but spare.
I mark thee bathe and bathe again
In sweet uncalendared spring rain.
I watch how all May has of sun
Makes haste to have thy ripeness done,
While all her nights let dews escape
To set and cool thy perfect shape.
Ah, fruit of fruits, no more I pause
To dream and seek thy hidden laws !
I stretch my hand and dare to taste,
In instant of delicious waste
On single feast, all things that went
To make the empire thou hast spent.

TRIUMPH.



NOT he who rides through conquered city's
gate,
At head of blazoned hosts, and to the sound
Of victors' trumpets, in full pomp and state
Of war, the utmost pitch has dreamed or found
To which the thrill of triumph can be wound ;

Nor he, who by a nation's vast acclaim
 Is sudden sought and singled out alone,
 And while the people madly shout his name,
 Without a conscious purpose of his own,
 Is swung and lifted to the nation's throne ;

But he who has all single-handed stood
 With foes invisible on every side,
 And, unsuspected of the multitude,
 The force of fate itself has dared, defied,
 And conquered silently.

Ah that soul knows
 In what white heat the blood of triumph glows !

RETURN TO THE HILLS.



LIKE a music of triumph and joy
 Sounds the roll of the wheels,
 And the breath of the engine laughs out
 In loud chuckles and peals,
 Like the laugh of a man that is glad
 Coming homeward at night ;
 I lean out of the window and nod
 To the left and the right,
 To my friends in the fields and the woods ;
 Not a face do I miss ;
 The sweet asters and browned golden-rod,
 And that stray clematis,
 Of all vagabonds dearest and best,
 In most seedy estate ;

I am sure they all recognize me ;
If I only could wait,
I should hear all the welcome which now
In their faces I read,
“ O true lover of us and our kin,
We all bid thee God speed ! ”

O my mountains, no wisdom can teach
Me to think that ye care
Nothing more for my steps than the rest,
Or that they can have share
Such as mine in your royal crown-lands,
Unencumbered of fee ;
In your temples with altars unhewn,
Where redemption is free ;
In your houses of treasure, which gold
Cannot buy if it seek ;
And your oracles, mystic with words,
Which men lose if they speak !

Ah ! with boldness of lovers who wed
I make haste to your feet,
And as constant as lovers who die,
My surrender repeat ;
And I take as the right of my love,
And I keep as its sign,
An ineffable joy in each sense
And new strength as from wine,
A seal for all purpose and hope,
And a pledge of full light,
Like a pillar of cloud for my day,
And of fire for my night.

"DOWN TO SLEEP."



NOVEMBER woods are bare and still ;
November days are clear and bright ;
Each noon burns up the morning's chill ;
The morning's snow is gone by night ;
Each day my steps grow slow, grow light,
As through the woods I reverent creep,
Watching all things lie "down to sleep."

I never knew before what beds,
Fragrant to smell, and soft to touch,
The forest sifts and shapes and spreads ;
I never knew before how much
Of human sound there is in such
Low tones as through the forest sweep
When all wild things lie "down to sleep."

Each day I find new coverlids
Tucked in, and more sweet eyes shut tight ;
Sometimes the viewless mother bids
Her ferns kneel down, full in my sight ;
I hear their chorus of "good night" ;
And half I smile, and half I weep,
Listening while they lie "down to sleep."

November woods are bare and still ;
November days are bright and good ;
Life's noon burns up life's morning chill ;

Life's night rests feet which long have stood ;
Some warm soft bed, in field or wood,
The mother will not fail to keep,
Where we can "lay us down to sleep."

FALLOW.



BOVE, below me, on the hill,
Great fields of grain their fulness fill ;
The golden fruit bends down the trees ;
The grass stands high round mowers'
knees ;
The bee pants through the clover-beds,
And cannot taste of half the heads ;
The farmer stands, with greedy eyes,
And counts his harvest's growing size.

Among his fields, so fair to see,
He takes no count, no note, of me.
I lie and bask, along the hill,
Content and idle, idle still,
My lazy silence never stirred
By breathless bee or hungry bird :
All creatures know the cribs which yield ;
No creature seeks the fallow field.

But to no field on all the hill
Come sun and rain with more good-will ;
All secrets which they bear and bring

To wheat before its ripening,
To clover turning purple red,
To grass in bloom for mowers' tread, —
They tell the same to my bare waste,
But never once bid me to haste.

Winter is near, and snow is sweet ;
Who knows if they be seeds of wheat
Or clover, which my bosom fill ?
Who knows how many summers will
Be needed, spent, before one thing
Is ready for my harvesting ?
And after all, if all were laid
Into sure balances and weighed,
Who knows if all the gain and get
On which hot human hearts are set
Do more than mark the drought and dearth
Through which this little dust of earth
Must lie and wait in God's great hand,
A patient bit of fallow land ?



LOVE'S RICH AND POOR.



TAKing me hand in hand,
Love led me through his land.
His land bloomed white and red ;
His palaces were fair ;

Glad people everywhere
Stood smiling.

Then Love said, —

“ With all my kingdom wins,
Never my heart begins
To rest ; my cruel poor
So rob my rich. By speech,
By look, they overreach,
And plunder every store.

“ My rich I love, and make
More rich, for giving's sake.
My poor I scorn ; they choose
Their chilly beggary ;
My gold is ready, free,
But they forget, refuse.

“ My rich I love. I weep
To see them starved, to keep
My worthless poor well fed ;
To see them shiver, cold,
While wrapped with fold on fold,
The beggars sleep in bed.

“ My rich I love, and yet
My love no law can set ;
In vain I warn and cry ;
They give, and give, and give ;
The selfish beggars live,
And smiling see them die.”

Then walking hand in hand
With Love throughout his land, —
Land blooming white and red, —
I saw that everywhere,
Where life and love looked fair,
It was as he had said.

LIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN-TOPS.



IN Alpine valleys, they who watch for dawn
Look never to the east ; but fix their eyes
On loftier mountain-peaks of snow, which rise
To west or south.

Before the happy morn
Has sent one ray of kindling red, to warn
The sleeping clouds along the eastern skies
That it is near, — flushing, in glad surprise,
These royal hills, for royal watchmen born,
Discover that God's great new day begins,
And, shedding from their sacred brows a light
Prophetic, wake the valley from its night.

Such mystic light as this a great soul wins,
 Who overlooks earth's wall of griefs and sins,
 And steadfast, always, gazing on the white
 Great throne of God, can call aloud with deep,
 Pure voice of truth, to waken them who sleep.

BAD-GASTEIN, AUSTRIA, September 9, 1869.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT IN ST. PETER'S.



OW on the marble floor I lie :

I am alone :

Though friendly voices whisper nigh,
 And foreign crowds are passing by,

I am alone.

Great hymns float through
 The shadowed aisles. I hear a slow
 Refrain, "Forgive them, for they know
 Not what they do."

With tender joy all others thrill ;

I have but tears :

The false priests' voices, high and shrill,
 Reiterate the "Peace, good-will" ;

I have but tears.

I hear anew

The nails and scourge ; then come the low
 Sad words, "Forgive them, for they know
 Not what they do."

Close by my side the poor souls kneel ;

I turn away ;

Half-pitying looks at me they steal ;

They think, because I do not feel,

I turn away.

Ah ! if they knew,

How following them, where'er they go,

I hear, " Forgive them, for they know

Not what they do

Above the organ's sweetest strains

I hear the groans

Of prisoners, who lie in chains,

So near, and in such mortal pains,

I hear the groans.

But Christ walks through

The dungeons of St. Angelo,

And says, " Forgive them, for they know

Not what they do."

And now the music sinks to sighs ;

The lights grow dim :

The Pastorella's melodies

In lingering echoes float and rise ;

The lights grow dim ;

More clear and true,

In this sweet silence, seem to flow

The words, " Forgive them, for they know

Not what they do."

The dawn swings incense, silver gray ;

The night is past ;

Now comes, triumphant, God's full day ;
 No priest, no church can bar its way :
 The night is past :
 How, on this blue
 Of God's great banner, blaze and glow
 The words, " Forgive them, for they know
 Not what they do ! "

ROME, December 26, 1868.

WELCOME.

TO C. C.



WELCOME ! Perhaps the simple word says
 all.

And yet, when from a country's earnest heart
 It sudden springs, quick pride and triumph
 start,

Eager as love, and even hold in thrall
 Of silence love's own speech, while they recall
 How in all men's great deeds of life and art
 Their native land immortal share and part
 Must keep.

But thou, O royal soul, how small
 Such laurels unto thee, we know who love
 Thee, and whom thou hast loved ! We dare to bring
 To thee this mite of silent offering,
 And know how it thy great, warm heart will move,
 That, dumb with joy, we find no voice as yet,
 And cannot see, because our eyes are wet !

THE SIGN OF THE DAISY.



ALL summer she scattered the daisy leaves ;
They only mocked her, as they fell.
She said : " The daisy but deceives ;
There is no virtue in its spell.
' He loves me not,' ' he loves me well,'
One story no two daisies tell."
Ah, foolish heart, which waits and grieves
Under the daisy's mocking spell !

But summer departed, and came again.
The daisies whitened every hill ;
Her heart had lost its last year's pain,
Her heart of love had had its fill,
And held love's secrets at its will.
The daisies stood untouched and still,
No message in that snowy rain
To one whose heart had had its fill !

So never the daisy's sweet sign deceives,
Though no two will one story tell ;
The glad heart sees the daisy leaves,
But thinks not of their hidden spell,
Heeds not which lingered and which fell.
" He loves me ; yes, he loves me well."
Ah, happy heart which sees, believes !
This is the daisy's secret spell !

VINTAGE.



BEFORE the time of grapes,
While they altered in the sun,
And out of the time of grapes,
When vintage songs were done, —

From secret southern spot,
Whose warmth not a mortal knew ;
From shades which the sun forgot,
Or could not struggle through, —

Wine sweeter than first wine,
She gave him by drop, by drop ;
Wine stronger than seal could sign,
She poured and did not stop.

Soul of my soul, the shapes
Of the things of earth are one ;
Rememberest thou the grapes
I brought thee in the sun ?

And darest thou still drink
Wine stronger than seal can sign ?
And smilest thou to think
Eternal vintage thine ?

LAST WORDS.

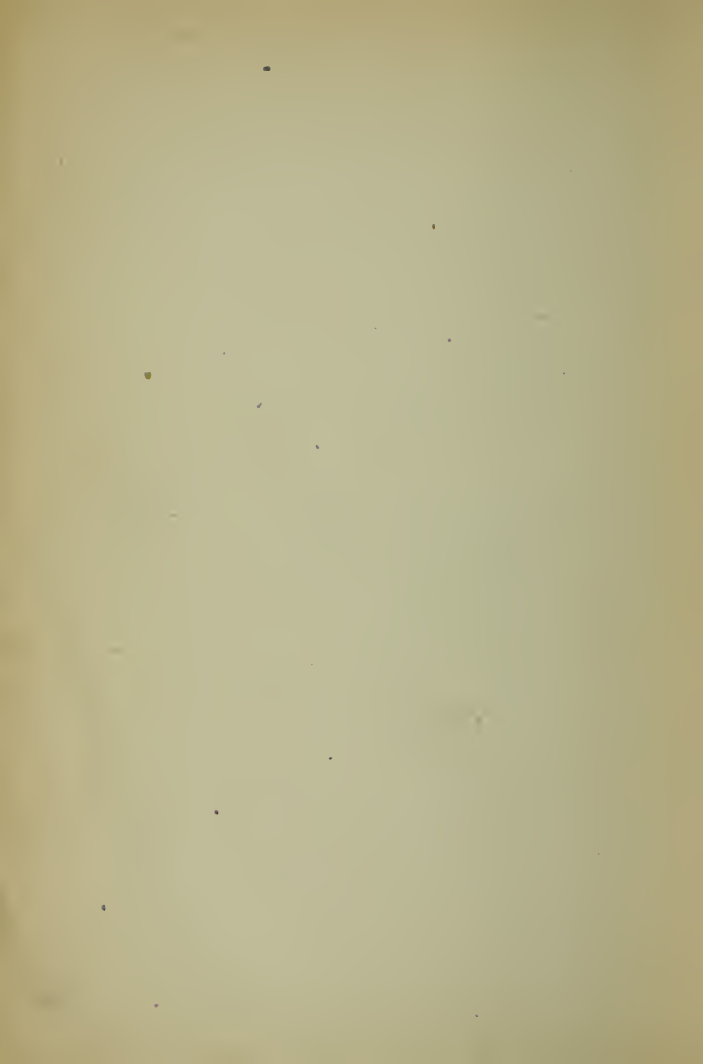


DEAR hearts, whose love has been so sweet
to know,
That I am looking backward as I go,
Am lingering while I haste, and in this rain
Of tears of joy am mingling tears of pain ;
Do not adorn with costly shrub, or tree,
Or flower, the little grave which shelters me.
Let the wild wind-sown seeds grow up unharmed,
And back and forth all summer, unalarmed,
Let all the tiny, busy creatures creep ;
Let the sweet grass its last year's tangles keep ;
And when, remembering me, you come some day
And stand there, speak no praise, but only say,
"How she loved us ! It was for that she was so
dear !"

These are the only words that I shall smile to hear.









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cJackson, Helen Hunt,
Verses, by H.H.

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